

D E R S I M



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To the Attention of Press and Public

“DERSİM ‘38 CONFERENCE”

European Parliament

WE WILL NOT FORGET OR LET FORGET THE DERSİM GENOCIDE!!

It's the 70th anniversary of the Dersim Genocide. Although 70 years have passed since the genocide by the Turkish Government in Dersim in 1937-38, this massacre has never been forgotten nor will it be forgotten as the culprits have not been brought out into light.

Dersim massacre started with the Turkish Republic regime presenting Dersim as a target by stating “Dersim is a ‘Pandora’s Box”.

First by means that aren't very common the name of Dersim was changed to ‘Tunceli in 1935.

In order to carry out this massacre, the Council of Ministers came together in Ankara on 4 May 1937 and formed ‘Tunceli Questioning Operation’ Council of Ministers and signed the half a page document classed as “Top Secret” which was the order for the Dersim massacre.

According to the official figures 12 thousand people were massacred in the Dersim Genocide. According to the people of Dersim 70 thousand people were massacred. After this atrocious act thousand of people were banished from their homeland.

On 16 November 1937, Seyit Riza who was one of the Kurdish leaders and seven of his comrades were hanged in Elazığ. Despite all attempts by the families, the grave sites of Seyit Riza and his comrades still haven't been disclosed.

Dersim Genocide is not the only genocide the Republican Turkey has committed towards Kurds and Alevis. During the reign of the Ottoman emperor Ahmet I. between 9 December 1606 and 5 August 1611, the “fire wells” of ‘Murat Pasha the Well digger’ who had murdered almost 100 thousand Kurdish Kizilbash Alevis, are still remembered by many. The problem Yavuz Sultan Selim couldn't solve in 1514 by murdering 40 thousand people by sword was attempted to be solved during 1935-1938 in Dersim once again by a massacre.

The 1938 tragedy has not only left behind the dead, the wounded and banishments, it has left behind a depopulated region whose name and all presence has been banned. The Dersim Kurds has faced a planned, systematic genocide and an extremely cruel assimilation process because of their; identity, language, culture and religious beliefs.

The “one language and one nation” policy of the Republic of Turkey that continues in today's society as been the source of serious massacres first in Kocgiri, then at Seyh Said Revolt, at Zilan and at Dersim.

During the Dersim Genocide the Turkish government has massacred thousands of people, those who survived were banished, Dersim was depopulated. The cause of these merciless acts was being Kurdish, Alevi and Kizilbash. Although 70 years have passed, Turkey is not willing to acknowledge this Genocide like many other Kurdish Genocides. Those responsible for the deaths of thousands of people have never been tried nor have they been brought out into light. The broken families could never discover their past. Thousands of people still haven't received news from their families and close friends. The whereabouts of the Kurdish children taken by the Turkish Government at the time

are unknown. Many other world countries who have had a similar experiences and committed genocide against its people have acknowledged the injustice and sorrow they have caused and have apologised. However Turkey is continuing to resist and use “it does not exist” strategy with the Kurdish Genocide just as they have with the Armenian Genocide.

Latin America called it “Making Peace”; the Japan called it “Leaving the past behind”; Italy had the “Cleaning Operation”; Austria took up “Nazi Cooperation”; Switzerland faced the “Nazi Accounts” and the “Nazi Gold”. Australia said “Sorry” to the Aborigines. Canada did the same for the Quebecois. South Africa put an end do the racist regime of Apartheid. This and similar examples prove that it is only possible to cleanse ourselves from the outworn traces and influences of the past by abandoning ‘denial’ and ‘destroying strategies’. As evident by these examples, the road to living together in peace goes through a democratic mentality transformation.

However, Turkey has not abandoned its desire for massacre, which it uses as a government policy. Kurdish regions are still being bombed, villages are being emptied, people being murdered because of their identity and culture. To remind the world public of Dersim Genocide in its 70th year, we are organising the **“Dersim ‘38 Conference”** at the European Parliament on **13 November 2008**. We will be there to face our history, to show that we have not forgotten nor will forget our ancestors and mothers who had been massacred.

We convey that the solution for our difference is not to kill or to die as it was the case in the Dersim Genocide and various other Kurdish Revolts, but to be seen as cultural richness. The solution for the Kurdish problem can be achieved not by denial or annihilation but by a peaceful approach. However, having a safe and secure future can be achieved if the government can face its past. Otherwise this pain and trauma will not end and it will not contribute to the solution to this problem.

Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Jews, Alevis-Kizilbashs, Syrians, Assyrians, all citizens of Turkey and those who were classed as “the other” are the real owners of this move for Turkey to accept its past.

It is for this reason the Association of Reconstruction of Dersim is organising a conference regarding the Dersim ’38 Genocide at the EU Parliament with the left party acting as the host.

We invite all EU countries, UN, civil public organisations and Kurdish people to show sympathy to this conference which will take place on 13 November 2008.

ASSOCIATION of RECONSTRUCTION of DERSİM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE